

CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 19, 2003

TO: City Council

FROM: Cathy R. Lazarus, Public Works Director
Frederick F. Fallah, Senior Project Manager

SUBJECT: SEPTEMBER 23, 2003 STUDY SESSION—NEW SENIOR CENTER,
PROJECT 04-28

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study session is for the City Council to provide the project team input regarding a preferred architectural style and layout for the new Senior Center.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

At the July 8, 2003 study session, the City Council provided general direction to staff and BSA Architects (BSA) about the architectural style and scale of the new Senior Center building and about green building techniques to incorporate into the new building. The major direction provided by Council at the study session is summarized as follows:

- Design the assembly/dining area to allow for rental use outside of the normal hours of the Senior Center programs.
- Design a building with a welcoming, residential scale, rather than a modern, "high-volume" building.
- Incorporate cost-effective building techniques and materials into the design to keep the project cost within budget.
- Incorporate green building techniques where cost-effective and compatible with the building's intended use.

- Selected three existing buildings as examples of architectural style to be considered for the new Senior Center. Photos of these existing buildings are provided as Attachment 1.

With this direction, BSA generated five distinct floor plans and building design concepts for Council's consideration (Attachments 2 through 6). Each concept was prepared by a different BSA designer who brought their own unique perspective to the project. These concepts were reviewed by the Senior Center Advisory Committee, the Design Review Committee and the project team, and their comments are summarized below. A description of each alternative and a discussion of design issues follows.

Preliminary Design Concepts

The five preliminary design concepts share similar program elements and areas in different layouts and architectural styles. Each design concept offers a different approach to site planning, building visibility and scale, and relationships between program functions in the building. For each design concept materials and massing can be adjusted. As an example, exterior shake or wood siding can be replaced with stucco and brick veneer to provide a more durable material. The materials and architectural style of each concept can also be mixed and matched with the different floor plans. A brief description of each option follows:

Option 1:

The exterior design of Option 1 is similar to the new Community Center design. The materials include cement plaster, precast concrete trim and shaped details with a metal roof. This design would create a stylistic link between the two facilities in Rengstorff Park.

Some characteristics of Option 1 include:

- Strong octagonal entry feature.
- Good views of facility from the administration area.
- Circulation is linear and straightforward.
- Lounge space is informal.
- Entry is somewhat hidden by the senior day health-care facility.

Option 2:

The exterior elevations of Option 2 are residential in scale and similar to a California crafts style. The exterior finishes emphasize a combination of warm materials such as cement plaster, brick, tile, metal and wood. The entrance is prominent in scale but is somewhat hidden by the senior day health-care facility. The Senior Center and the senior day health-care facility are visually and physically linked by a variety of outdoor spaces.

Some characteristics of Option 2 include:

- Entry is somewhat hidden by the senior day health-care facility.
- Less visual control from the administration area.
- Circulation is linear and straightforward.
- No defined lounge space.
- Strong connection to the senior day health-care facility.

Option 3:

The exterior of Option 3 is an interpretation of a lodge-style building with visible fireplaces, large porches and exterior finishes of natural materials. The layout is centered around a courtyard that is enclosed on three sides by the building. The building entry is very visible from the street because it projects beyond the senior day health-care building and faces directly toward Escuela Avenue.

Some characteristics of Option 3 include:

- Entry less hidden by the senior day health-care facility.
- Good views of facility from the administration area.
- Circulation is linear and straightforward.
- Well-defined lobby/lounge space.

- Enclosed, well-defined courtyard.
- Lengthy circulation and extended lobby/lounge are required to wrap courtyard.

- Large amount of exterior wall space is required to wrap courtyard.
- Larger-scale building.

Option 4:

Option 4 is rendered as a California adobe with simple planar cement plaster walls, controlled wall openings and tile roofs. In this approach, the building is rotated with a tall curved circulation space that extends like an interior street from the lobby and lounge around the courtyard. The building entry is directed back toward the parking area.

Some characteristics of Option 4 include:

- Entry is oriented away from the street.
- Poor views of facility from the administration area.
- Circulation is not linear.
- Not a strong connection to the senior day health-care facility.
- Extended circulation is required to wrap courtyard.
- Visible curved wall feature.
- Good interior day lighting.
- Diagonal views toward park.
- Assembly area does not open to patio.

Option 5:

This option places the highest priority on a green building design approach by orienting the building for controlled north light, shade control on the south and possible roof-mounted photovoltaic panels. The roof forms are skewed to be within 15 degrees of due south, which is the best orientation for solar panels to function efficiently. The taller shed forms allow north light to the activity rooms, linked by lower roof circulation and support elements. Although this option represents a sound green building concept,

achieving the best building orientation within the confines of this site may not be the most practical approach.

Some characteristics of Option 5 include:

- Entry is somewhat hidden by the senior day health-care facility.
- Poor views of facility from the administration area.
- Circulation is not linear.
- Lounge space is informal.
- Optimizes solar orientation.

Design Issues

As the design concepts were developed, several important site and building considerations emerged:

Building Entrances

The main building entrance should be visible from Escuela Avenue and the senior day health-care facility. A visual or physical connection between the two facilities is also important to establish a relationship between the two structures sharing the site.

Because most of the Senior Center parking will be at the west end of the site nearest Rengstorff Park, there should be a second entrance at the west end of the building, and a third building entrance is included from the allee on the north side of the building. These auxiliary entrances will enable seniors access to the park and the allee. It is important that staff at the reception desk have good visibility of building entrances.

Outdoor Spaces

Two types of formal outdoor courtyard spaces are desired for the facility. A courtyard between the Senior Center and senior day health-care facility is provided on the Master Plan. State regulations require that the senior day health-care facility have access to this area, and the courtyard must, therefore, be secured to prevent their clients from wandering from the premises. The Senior Center will likely use this space for programmed events. A second patio/outdoor space is provided in each option near the

lobby, lounge and assembly area for the exclusive use of the Senior Center, creating a strong focal point for the building and allowing interior functions to extend outside.

Potential to Use Assembly/Dining Space for Rental Functions

The approved program area for the assembly/dining space in the new Senior Center is approximately 4,000 square feet which will easily accommodate the current seating of up to 160 people for the daily nutrition program. The proposed dining area will accommodate approximately 200 people seated at round banquet tables. At rectangular tables, the capacity increases to approximately 235, though this additional seating capacity may not justify the additional cost and storage space required for both types of tables. Both arrangements allow some floor space for a speaker or dancing. The assembly/dining area and other program spaces are suitable for rental and catered events when the Senior Center is not in use.

Senior Center Advisory Committee, Design Review Committee and Staff Comments

Senior Center Advisory Committee

On August 28, 2003, staff met with the Senior Center Advisory Committee (SCAC) to discuss the five concepts. There was a consensus that design Option 3 was the best floor plan. Members of the Committee liked the linear circulation pattern, the well-defined outdoor courtyard and the formal lounge area. They felt the administration/reception area should be modified to assure visibility down hallways to the various entrances. They also felt that the secondary entrance to the building should be inviting because seniors who park west of the building will most likely use this entrance.

The nonlinear circulation of Options 4 and 5 were of particular concern. This layout could be confusing and there could be a problem giving directions within the building. These layouts also do not provide good visibility from the administration area.

There was not consensus on a particular building elevation. Exterior Options 2, 3 and 4 were all named by individual committee members as the best option. There was a general consensus that the front entry to the building should be somewhat prominent. Minutes of the meeting are included as Attachment 6.

Design Review Committee (DRC) Comments

On September 4, 2003, staff met with the Development Review Committee (DRC) and presented the five Senior Center floor plans and design concepts. The Committee thought the floor plan of Option 3 provided the best building layout. The Committee felt that the outdoor courtyard provides a nice break along the mass of building in a logical place, that the entrances to the building are better thought out than the other plans and that maintaining the generous width of the interior circulation areas was important to the success of this layout.

The Committee also liked the exterior design concept of Option 3 but thought that the cost of the materials may be an issue. They encouraged the use of skylights and a clerestory to break the horizontal monotony of the roof ridge line.

The DRC discouraged use of the floor plan of Options 4 and 5 as they thought the circulation might be confusing to some seniors. The Committee felt the exterior design concepts of Option 2 could be implemented as a less costly alternative to Option 3. They also thought the design concept of Option 1 is too institutional and is not appropriate for the Senior Center.

The DRC also thought alternative paving materials, landscape elements or other measures should be used to differentiate the drop-off area from the main entrance to the parking lot.

Project Team Comments

The project team concurs that Option 3 provides the best floor plan and recommends further development of the building elevations of Option 2 or Option 3. Senior Center staff reviewed the various floor plans and considered Option 3 the best overall plan. Some minor improvements to provide better visibility for the administrative area were suggested. Their concerns about Options 1 and 2, which included narrow hallways (Option 1) and limited lobby space (Option 2) could be addressed with additional design effort. The nonlinear circulation and the isolation of the administrative areas in Options 4 and 5 appeared problematic to staff and would be more difficult to address with these designs.

Cost Considerations

Because these options are only concepts at this early stage of design, a detailed cost analysis of each alternative is not yet possible. While cost comparison of the different

building elevation options is difficult before materials are selected, the floor plans can be compared in terms of features that will affect construction cost. Based on the information available at this time, Option 1 and Option 2 appear to be the most cost-effective plans because they are laid out in a relatively efficient and linear way. Option 3 is less efficient because the building wraps around the courtyard, adding circulation and exterior wall area. While this feature adds cost to the building relative to the more efficient options, it was considered a positive design feature by the DRC, the Senior Center Advisory Committee and the project team. The layout of Options 4 and 5 appear to be relatively more costly than the other concepts because the building layout is complex and nonlinear. Such a layout requires the use of more custom framing and complex structural systems that add to construction cost.

Use of materials and other design techniques can be employed strategically to achieve any of these building concepts within the project budget.

Green Building Techniques

One of the major green building techniques that can be addressed at this early stage in design is building and roof orientation. Of the options presented, Option 5 represents the most concerted effort toward a green building orientation. This orientation impacts the building design and may not be suitable considering the constraints of the site. A more linear building design better fits the site and is more suited to the senior population.

The orientation and design of the other options does not preclude the use of natural light and solar panels, though efficiency is somewhat reduced. Also, the black, shiny appearance of solar panels may not integrate well with the shape, materials and colors of the other options.

Regardless of building orientation, all of the options afford opportunities to use green building techniques. Natural light and ventilation, green building materials and energy and water conservation measures can be employed with any selected option. The project team plans to explore options for appropriate and cost-effective use of these techniques as design continues.

Use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

At the April 22, 2003 CDBG hearing, the Council directed staff to investigate the possibility of using CDBG funds for the Senior Center design costs. Staff has investigated this issue and does not recommend the use of these funds for the Senior Center. The

attached memo from Elaine Costello explains the issues investigated and the recommended use of the funds (Attachment 8).

SUMMARY

Comments from the City Council, DRC and building users about the proposed building options will be incorporated by BSA into the next level of building design. The schematic design phase of the project will continue during the next three months and a refined floor plan and building elevations will be prepared. In addition to furthering the design of the Senior Center, selection of a design concept will allow Avenidas to continue with the design of the senior day health-care facility.

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Attachments: 1. Photos of Existing Facilities
2-6. Schematic Options 1 through 5
7. Senior Center Advisory Committee Minutes
8. CDBG Memorandum Dated September 12, 2003

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Parks and Recreation Commission

New Senior Center Advisory Committee

APWD—Ko, TPM, CPE, RS—Petersen, SPM—Fallah, PM—Rose, SDZA,
SRC—Marchant